



# Avian Influenza

## *"Bird Flu" Facts*

### A Few Facts about Avian Influenza in Alaska (*"bird flu"*)

There have been a lot of stories in the news about avian influenza, or the bird flu virus.

Here are some facts that many news stories don't make clear:

- The current Asian H5N1 strain of bird flu that has been in the news has not been found in any wild or farm-raised birds in America.
- There's no evidence that anyone has caught the virus from a wild bird.
- No one has caught this virus from eating a fully cooked bird, either domestic or wild.
- When wild birds in other countries have caught this flu and died, it is believed that, at least in some cases, they caught it from farmed chickens or other domestic birds
- A number of state and federal agencies will be testing wild birds for H5N1 in Alaska this season. You may see biologists wearing protective gear while testing wild birds. These scientists handle many more birds than a hunter would, and are taking samples that contain bird droppings as part of their work. Furthermore, they are examining healthy, live birds that struggle while they're being tested, and can fling droppings, feathers, and dander all over the scientists doing the tests. Remember that the Asian H5N1 virus has not yet been detected anywhere in North



Izembek Lagoon, Alaska

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America, and that there have been no confirmed reports of anyone, anywhere, catching this form of avian influenza from a wild bird.

#### What You Can Do For Safety

The virus is more widespread in other parts of the world today than it has ever been, so now is a time to be careful. Here are a few things you can do.

- Cook any birds, wild or store-bought, until they're done all the way through before eating them.
- Wash your hands and knife with soap and water (or at least use a packaged commercial antiseptic hand cleaner) after handling or cleaning any birds, or wear rubber gloves. (And be sure not to smoke or eat until after you've cleaned up.) In remote

areas without cleaning supplies, use common sense and avoid touching your mouth or face.

- If you see dead or sick birds, especially if something you notice seems unusual, call 1-866-5-BRDFLU (1-866-527-3358). *Do not handle birds found sick or dead!*

#### For more information:

[http://alaska.fws.gov/media/avian\\_influenza/](http://alaska.fws.gov/media/avian_influenza/)

**Note: This material was produced on March 23, 2006. The avian influenza issue is constantly changing. See the website above to determine if the information in this copy has been updated due to new developments.**

*The Alaska Avian Influenza Information Group includes representatives from the Alaska Departments of Health and Social Services, Fish and Game, and Environmental Conservation; the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*